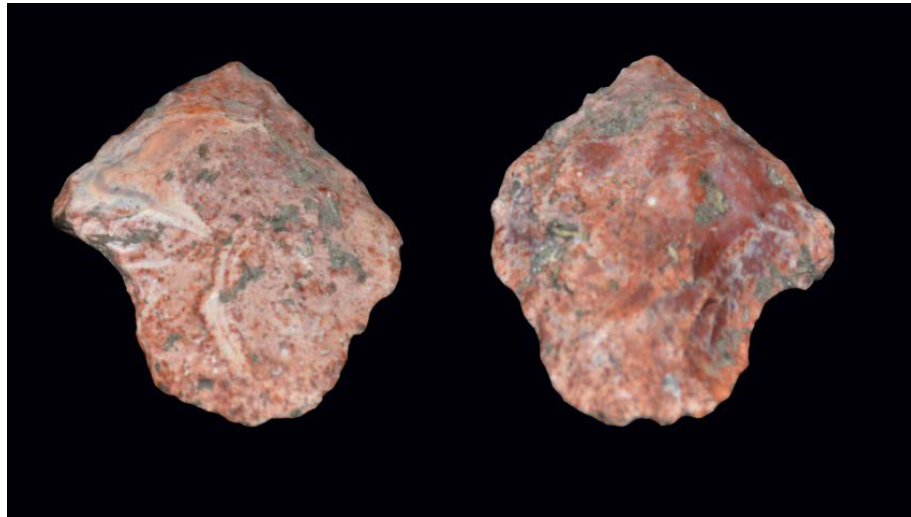


# Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

December 2017



THPO 2016.1.455

Found on the Brighton reservation, this artifact is an unfinished projectile point made of heat treated chert. Chert, and other cryptocrystalline silicates are sedimentary rocks that form as nodules within limestone or chalk. Fine grained and very easily fractured, chert is an ideal material for projectile points. Very small flakes can be taken off of a larger stone, making the manufacture of a sophisticated tool much easier to control. As we can see across the body of this artifact, small flakes have been taken off to form the shape of the point itself, as well as the partially formed “stem” that can be seen on a single side.

The application of heat to some materials allows for them to flake easier and more predictably, and increases workability. When heated, the structural integrity of the material itself is altered, making it more glass-like. But, it can be difficult to control. Overheating can cause the material to turn chalky, or have small potlids blow out from heat. Heat can change the color of the material as well, usually to a deep reddish or pink such as is seen here. In the case of this artifact, it was heat treated prior to the point production. Flakes as they appear on this piece are not dull, or singed looking. Most likely, a large core was heated and then reduced down to create this point.

Since this point is unfinished, it is difficult to make a determination of age or point type. This point most closely resembles a Westo point from the Bullen typology found in Alachua county (FMNH). Dating from the Woodland/Post-archaic period, this point type is generally found in north, north-west Florida. Clearly unfinished, it also might be an example of a crude practice point that was discarded.

